



Australian Bureau of Statistics

2060.0 - Discussion Paper: Enhancing the Population Census: Developing a Longitudinal View, 2006

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ABS says privacy fears unfounded

It is disappointing to see that the Census Data Enhancement proposal continues to be misrepresented by some in the media.

The purpose of this proposal is to provide richer statistical information about Australian society and improve policy development and community decision making.

The proposal will not change any of the safeguards protecting people's information. Census name and address information held by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will continue to be destroyed at the end of Census processing, as has been the practice in the past.

There will be no "centralised population database", as Anna Johnston of the Australian Privacy Foundation has claimed.

The central feature of the proposal is the creation of a Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset. This involves combining the information provided in the upcoming 2006 Census with information provided in future censuses, and possibly the 2001 Census, using statistical methods.

Specific data from the Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset may also be brought together with a limited range of other information, such as from deaths records for specific statistical studies. Any dataset created in this way will not contain names or addresses and, as with other ABS data, no information that could lead to the identification of an individual will be released by the ABS.

The ABS will continue to provide the same level of protection of the confidentiality of people's information as it has done for the past 100 years of its history.

Media Note: The proposal is fully detailed in the paper **Enhancing the Population Census: Developing a Longitudinal View** (cat.no. 2060.0).

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